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Recollections of the Establishment of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States, Part 6

Joseph Rosati C.M.

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Recollections of the Establishment of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States of America, VI.

Bishop Joseph Rosati, C.M.
Translated and Annotated by Stafford Poole, C.M.

[Bishop Rosati completed the writing of his Recollections in February 1840. He ended the account, however, at the beginning of the year 1831, the time at which he ceased having any official authority over the Vincentian mission in America. In this concluding installment, he describes his life as coadjutor to Bishop Dubourg of Louisiana and as the first Bishop of Saint Louis.]

In order to carry out the duties of Superior of the Congregation, which he continued to exercise by order of the Pope and at the insistence repeated in all the letters that he frequently received from the Vicar General of the Congregation, Mr. Baccari, the new Bishop made a visitation of all the Missionaries of the Congregation in Lower Louisiana. He stayed for some weeks with Mr. Tichitoli at Mr. Bigeschi’s residence. He went to Saint Joseph, near Thibodeauville, where Messrs. Potini and Rosati were living. He made a trip to Opelousas in order to see Mr. Cellini who was in charge of the parish at Grand Couteau, founded by Mr. Charles Smith and his pious wife, Mme. Marie Santec Smith. This lady was left a widow with a nice fortune that she had amassed with her husband and half of which, according to the laws of the state, she had given to the dead man’s heirs since she had no children. She thought of dedicating her goods to an establishment of the Congregation in that same parish where she had already founded and endowed a convent of the Sacred Heart. She made this proposal to Mr.
Rosati who foreseeing the difficulties, rumors and complaints that would not have failed to cause scandal and harm to religion, thought that he ought to follow the maxims and conduct of Saint Vincent, whose tact in such situations is well known, and refuse the offer. There was good reason to be satisfied with this course. Finally, Mr. Rosati saw Mr. Acquaroni in New Orleans. His health had not been helped by his stay in that city. The humid climate of Louisiana did not suit him and was even more harmful than that of Missouri. So he was given permission to return to Europe.

After he had seen all his confreres, the new coadjutor returned to Missouri, delighted with the great good that had been done in Louisiana in such a short time since Msgr. Dubourg had sent his Missionaries there. He was accompanied by Mr. Potini and, after having visited Saint Louis, he went to the seminary on 24 April, where he was happy to see himself in the bosom of the Community and take up anew the thread of his ordinary occupations.

It should be observed here that in spite of the difficulties of a rather rough beginning, the discomfort of an uncomfortable and cooped up dwelling, the multiplicity of occupations, the distraction of the works of the house and the countryside, the commotion made by the workers, the care of a parish that was growing daily, all the exercises of the Community, the novitiate and the seminary were always followed in their turn by everyone and presided over by the Superior in person.

The Community had its hours for meditation, examens, spiritual conferences, chapter, etc. The novices, in addition, had their times for the exercises special to the novitiate and the manual labor that was part of it was not, in any sense, an amusement or pastime. It was hard enough and of great usefulness to the house.

The seminarians also made it their pleasure to spend their recreation and most of their holidays in work. Even after the Superior became a bishop, he used to go with them
and encourage them by his example. In winter they could be seen in the woods, busy with cutting, sawing and transporting the supplies needed to keep them warm during the rest of the week or with rolling, piling up and burning the tree trunks when they were clearing the fields. Often, on other occasions, they were busy at the quarries from which they brought the stone for the construction of the house and the church. They made roofing shingles, hauled materials of all kinds, and on pressing occasions all these ecclesiastics and their Superior at their head could be seen out in the fields, gathering up the corn stalks, the beans, the pumpkins and the corn, in a word, doing every kind of work when their help was asked.

Nevertheless, the work in the fields did not dispense them from anything that was necessary or useful for them to become in the future worthy ministers of the sanctuary. Nothing was neglected in this regard and everything was done with order. A rule that agreed on all essential points with the rules (of seminaries) directed by our Congregation, but adapted to the circumstances and localities in which they found themselves, had been drawn up in Latin. It was read several times a year and the Superior explained it to the seminarians. It not only designated the exercises and external practices but gave the means of knowing and assuring one’s vocation, of acquiring and increasing the ecclesiastical spirit and forming the ecclesiastical virtues. It recommended the opening of one’s heart to the Superior or to the Director once a month.\(^1\) And it must be said in praise of those young ecclesiastics who were in the seminary at that time that almost all of them were very faithful in observing that point of the rule.

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\(^1\)The reference is to what was known as the internal communication. In Bishop Rosati’s times, religious Superiors and Directors could hear such communications and habitually did so. It was not until the revised Code of Canon Law in 1918 that a clear distinction was made between internal and external forum in such cases.
Every day the Superior was present at spiritual reading in person and he never failed to make some appropriate comments to make it more useful. He also presided at the spiritual conference that was held once a week for the seminarians who, according to the method of Saint Vincent, were first asked to tell the good sentiments and good thoughts that they had had during the meditation made on the subject of the conference. The Superior himself concluded it with a simple and practical discourse on the same subject. The rosary [and] visits to the Blessed Sacrament were among the daily exercises of the seminary. During one of those visits they recited in common that beautiful prayer that Saint Francis Xavier composed to obtain the conversion of sinners and unbelievers. They never failed to make their annual retreat at the beginning of the school year.

Classes were also given and attended with great care. They centered on the Latin, Greek, French and English languages. It was not enough to have the rules of these languages learned in class, but they were also required to practice them during their daily recreations. The rule required that English be spoken at recreation one week, French another, and finally during the third week Latin. On holidays they were free to speak whatever language they wanted. These methods produced the happiest results. The

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2It is uncertain which prayer Bishop Rosati was referring to. Saint Francis wrote several and recent biographies do not reprint all of them. A nineteenth century biography by a Father Bouhours reproduces a French translation of a Latin original that may be the prayer said at the seminary. The French reads as follows. *O Dieu Éternel, Créateur de toutes choses, souvenez-vous que les âmes des infidèles sont l’ouvrage de vos mains, et que c’est à votre ressemblance qu’elles sont créés. Voila, Seigneur, que l’enfer s’en remplit à la honte de votre nom. Souvenez-vous que Jésus-Christ votre fils a souffert pour leur salut une mort très-crue, ne permettez plus, je vous prie, qu’il soit méprisé des idolâtres. Laissez-vous fléchir par les prières de l’Eglise sa très-sainte épouse, et souvenez-vous de votre miséricorde. Oubliez, Seigneur, leur infidélité, et faites en sorte qu’ils reconnaissent enfin pour leur Dieu Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ, que vous avez envoyé au monde, et qui est notre salut, notre vie, notre resurrection, par lequel nous avons été délivrés des enfers, et à qui soit la gloire durant les siècles des siècles!* [La vie de St. François Xavier, apôtre des Indes et du Japon (Avignon, 1828), I, p. 217.]
Creoles and French soon acquired a facility in speaking English and the Americans and Irish the same in French. And very many, especially the younger Creoles, French and Americans, could express themselves easily and gracefully in Latin in their daily conversations. To the study of languages was added the study of geography, history, mathematics, and there were the ordinary lessons in philosophy, theology and Holy Scripture. Rather often, also, there was practice in apologetics.

Ceremonies and chant were not neglected, for they were not looked on as trifles or matters of indifference. If the Church has judged that external worship is necessary for men who are composed of body and soul, if it has not thought that it lowered itself when it prescribed laws for carrying out that worship, if it has judged it worthy of itself to descend to prescribing and detailing all the ceremonies that it has adopted, if ecclesiastical chant has been the object of its sollicitude, if the holiest and wisest Popes have on occasions put it among the number of their concerns, if they have given it an orderly form and taken it upon themselves to teach it to children, how could an ecclesiastic disdain these means so necessary for the fittingness and majesty of worship? At Saint Mary’s Seminary thought was thereupon given to this as it was in all the seminaries that were well-ordered and animated by the ecclesiastical spirit, the same thought as that of Saint Vincent de Paul and his Congregation. The Superior, who himself had been trained at Rome, had asked for and obtained from Rome whatever was necessary for following in chant and in ceremonies the usages of that mother and mistress of Christendom with all possible exactitude. He had translated the manual of ceremonies into English. He then had copies of it distributed to the seminarians. There was regularly every Saturday a practice for ceremonies at the seminary and when the great solemnities that had their own special ceremonies occurred, they were prepared in advance. With regard to chant, there was a half
hour class every day and the Superior was also the one in charge of giving it. He was very happy to find in his seminarians many natural dispositions and much good will and zeal. Singing provided the entertainment for their recreations and their walks, in which the Superior was also in the midst of the seminarians. It was a surprising thing in those woodlands to go into the poor church that existed at that time and see in it a very beautiful and well adorned altar, a numerous clergy, the sacred ministers clothed in lovely vestments surround the Bishop and offer to God the solemn homage of his people in a way that expressed to the senses the lofty idea that creatures ought to have of their creator.

Still, the church's small sanctuary was very congested and it was not big enough to hold all the seminary clergy. Although preparations were made to build a nice church, nevertheless it was clear that it would be several years before they would have the happiness of finishing it. So it was necessary to adopt some plan to take care of present needs. So thought was given to adding to the end of the church, opposite the door, a good-sized room to serve as a sanctuary and an out-building behind this room to serve as a sacristy. In this way the people could use all the space of what was then the sanctuary. This was done with unfinished lumber and the interior was plastered. By this means divine services could be carried out better than before.

The coadjutor always attended them and generally he was the one who preached at the High Mass. For he had been obliged to have Messrs. Ponti and [blank] leave for Louisiana in July. He also continued with the direction of the convent, heard the confessions of the Sisters every Saturday, and gave them instructions every week.

In that year of 1824, these good young ladies had the consolation of being visited by their venerable father and founder, Mr. Charles Nerinckx, but, alas, they paid for it very dearly, for this holy priest, after having spent some days
in giving instructions to the Sisters at their convent of Bethlehem, left for Saint Louis where he wanted to visit the Jesuit establishment at Saint Ferdinand. They were all his fellow countrymen and he himself had led them from Belgium to Baltimore. On arriving there, he had an opportunity to see Mr. Ottara, one of his Catholics, formerly of Kentucky, who had established himself with many others in Illinois, in Randolph County, about six miles from Prairie du Rocher. He stopped with him and said Mass and preached and heard confessions and persuaded these Catholics to build a small church, giving them the hope that they might have the happiness of having regular visits by a priest. They promised to do so and he took their word for it. On his return from Saint Louis he again stopped with Mr. Ottara, found that the loghouse for the church was already built, heard confessions until the afternoon, said Mass, preached and administered Holy Communion to these good Catholics. Alas! It was the last of his missions. It was to crown the long and laborious course of this apostolic man.

It was August and the heat then was excessive. After Mass, worn out with fatigue, feeling very much worse — it was the beginning of his illness — he asked for a glass of cool water, drank it and immediately after noted that he was being attacked by fever. He immediately got on his horse and went to Sainte Genevieve. On going into the rectory, he asked Mr. Dahman for a bed and he lay down, never to get up again. Seeing that his end was approaching, he wished to see Mr. Rosati. A messenger was sent to him, but when he arrived at Sainte Genevieve, the thirteenth of that month, the holy missionary had already breathed his last. The next day his mortal remains were taken to the Barrens and after solemn obsequies were buried in the cemetery of his dear daughters,

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3The first Jesuits in Missouri, like Nerinckx, and the Vincentian de Neckere, were all Flemings.
who felt most strongly the loss of their well-loved father. 4

During the course of that same year, 1824, another exercise was also begun which became very useful to the seminarians while it served for the edification and instruction of the faithful. A certain number of those good Catholics who lived near the church did not fail to go there after dinner on Sundays and Holydays to attend Vespers. After that there was a pious reading from the lives of the saints. It was thought that it was a good opportunity to get the seminarians used to speaking in public and give them practice in preaching, since the number of listeners was not large and they were all pious persons. They were prepared far in advance and the discourse that they were to give was read and in this way the danger of degrading the word of God was avoided.

During vacation that year, at the beginning of September, Msgr. Rosati was sent some letters from a Catholic who lived in the Arkansas territory. Having learned what was being done in Missouri and Louisiana for the good of religion, he deplored the situation of the poor Catholics who lived in Arkansas, deprived of every means of practicing it. The person who wrote was an Italian, named Bucchietti. He had been on the point of going to Mexico and by an act in legal form had given the Bishop a piece of land and asked him to send a priest to that region. Everyone at the seminary was touched by this letter and the Superior sent there Mr. Odin, who had been ordained the previous year, and Mr. Timon, who was still only a young cleric.

After these gentlemen left the seminary, they began their mission first at Apple Creek, continued it all along the way to New Madrid, where they spent some time, and proceeded with their journey to the Post5 and other parts of

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4Nerinckx was buried in the cemetery of the Sisters of Loretto, almost directly across the road from the present administration building of Saint Mary's Seminary. In December 1833 the remains were translated to Kentucky.

5The reference is unclear. It may be to the Arkansas Post (now a national monument) about forty miles southeast of Pine Bluff.
Arkansas which they visited. They preached everywhere not only to Catholics but also to Protestants, baptizing a large number of children, administering the Sacraments and doing a great deal of good everywhere. They had much to put up with on their trip, they were sometimes exposed to the danger of perishing in the swamps. But they also had very great consolation from Catholics, Protestants, and even from the Indians. These latter showed a great joy on seeing them and a very great respect and attachment. They returned to the seminary worn out with fatigue at the end of October. They had baptized more than two hundred persons, both children and adults.

After Mr. Cellini had returned from Louisiana in the month of November, he was assigned to visit Kaskaskia, the Catholics at the O’Hara settlement and elsewhere. He also did a great deal of good there and continued his visits during all the time that he stayed at the seminary. He returned to Europe at the end of January. Mr. Borgna, on his return from Europe, had brought with him Mr. Permoli, a priest of the Congregation, who together with Mr. De Neckere and Mr. Bouiller, a subdeacon of the Diocese of Lyons, and Mr. Chalons, a cleric, reached the seminary on 20 March 1825.

Some pressing letters from Msgr. Dubourg urged his coadjutor to go down to Louisiana on business that was very important to the diocese and the Congregation. He entrusted the care of the seminary and of the Community to Mr. de Neckere and on 5 August Msgr. Rosati boarded a steamboat to join the Bishop of New Orleans, whom he met at Assumption parish on the sixteenth of the same month. He was very surprised when this prelate communicated to him the plan he had conceived of moving the principal establishment of the Congregation to Louisiana. So he proposed to his coadjutor that he go there himself with the entire Community and leave one priest with some young cleric at the Barrens. The reasons he offered for such a determination were the need for an establishment in that
part of the diocese that he considered very much more important than the other and the greater ease of supporting the Community and the seminary in a richer area. Msgr. Rosati represented to the worthy prelate the state in which religion in Missouri would be left if that resource were removed, that all the priests had already been removed from Saint Louis, with one exception, that the college that had been established when he arrived in that city and that had had a great success there had been closed for lack of professors, that it was not necessary to abandon entirely that poor area that had already given him so much consolation. The Bishop, nevertheless, continued to insist and assured his coadjutor that his refusal to give in to these measures would ruin the diocese. The latter noted that being a member of a Community that had a Superior General, he could not undertake an affair of such importance without seeking the advice of his Council and asking the consent and approval of the Vicar General.

When he had returned to the seminary toward the end of November 1825, Msgr. Rosati assembled all the priests of the Congregation, explained to them Msgr. Dubourg's wish and the motives on which it was based and they all advised begging Msgr. Dubourg to be pleased to desist from the execution of that plan. Rome was also contacted and the Vicar General was of the same opinion. Although this refusal very much afflicted him, the worthy Bishop of New Orleans was desirous only of good and, deeply struck by the urgent needs that were immediately before his eyes in that part of the diocese where he lived, sought every means to provide for it. Nevertheless, the same prelate recognized some time later that it was by a special disposition of Providence that Missouri had not been totally abandoned. For, having resolved to make a trip to Europe, he visited the seminary in the month of April 1826 and then went to Saint Louis. Surprised by the rapid growth of that city and of all the entire country, it was not difficult for him to foresee at that time...
what it was destined to become. "Providence," he thus wrote to his coadjutor on 11 March 1826 while he was going to New York on a steamboat on his last voyage to Europe,

Providence has permitted that I come to Saint Louis for a number of reasons of the highest importance, among others that of being witness to the new take-off of this city and the entire country. It foretells the most extraordinary development and it must solidify the ideas, up to then rather vague, that we had formed of the importance of our establishments for the future of religion in that country.

He left from New York for Le Havre on the first of June, together with Mr. Martial and Mr. Abel.

The Community at the Barrens went on replacing the personnel that it had had to send to Louisiana and those who had returned to Europe with others whom Providence brought to it. Mr. Bouiller had been admitted into the Congregation and he had been raised to the priesthood during the course of that year, as had Messrs. Paquin, Timon and Vergani, members who had been received and trained in America, and they were filled with the spirit of their state. Messrs. Odin and de Neckere, older in vocation and priesthood, were quite involved in the functions of their Institute and worked with zeal and results in teaching and the ministry. These latter two gave a long mission at New Madrid that produced a great deal of good. These gentlemen had found in New Madrid and in the surrounding countryside about twenty-four Catholic families who had not had a priest for very many years. There had once been a church dedicated to Saint Isidore, but it no longer existed, the river having broken out of its banks and submerged the site of the church. Our Missionaries set to work in earnest. Mr. McCoy gave them hospitality and they rented a house in which to celebrate the holy mysteries and assemble the faithful. In it they taught catechism twice a day and preached twice on Sundays and other Holydays. On Ascension day fifteen
children made their First Communion. The number would have been very much larger, but, unfortunately, they found that the roads in the region were practically impassable at that time because of the rains and floods. The season was also unfavorable to them because of the pressing work in the fields. They heard a large number of Confessions. Some persons who had not had the happiness of receiving the Bread of Angels for a long time approached the holy table.

This mission caused zeal for their religion to revive among the Catholics of New Madrid. They resolved to build a church in hope of henceforth having some priests. And they took up a good collection for that purpose. Messrs. Odin and de Neckere were obliged to shorten this mission and return to the seminary because of the approaching departure of Msgr. Rosati for Louisiana. They arrived there on 10 May. Mr. Odin was appointed to take the place of the Superior and Mr. de Neckere was made his assistant.

Msgr. Dubourg’s trip to Europe obliged his coadjutor to go down to Louisiana on business of the diocese. Still he did not expect to be involved in a matter that he had to arrange because of the nomination of Mr. Portier to the episcopal dignity and to the Vicariate Apostolic of Alabama and the Floridas.

This worthy ecclesiastic was at the head of a flourishing college in New Orleans. He had sent the briefs of his nomination back to Rome and had begged the Holy Father to be pleased to agree to the refusal that his modesty caused him to give to this dignity. But Leo XII did not consent. He had the letters of nomination sent again with a precise order to submit.

It was necessary, then, to make the necessary arrangements so that this establishment would not be permitted to collapse. Msgr. Portier agreed to retain it until the end of the school year and for that reason he put off his consecration for some months. He turned the college over to the Bishop of New Orleans and Mr. Desmoulins was named its President.
The Bishop of Tenagra immediately went back up to the seminary and arrived there on Saint Vincent's day [19 July] and there resumed his classes and his ordinary occupations. For he was obliged to deprive himself of the assistance that Mr. de Neckere was giving him because of the ill-health that he was suffering. He sent him to Saint Louis where this worthy ecclesiastic did not remain idle, for he regularly preached in English at the Cathedral, where by his eloquent discourses he attracted not only all the Catholics who spoke that language but also a very large number of Protestants whom he caused to respect and appreciate Catholic teaching. But he was not able to remain there for very long. His health continued to grow worse and worse and the doctors declared in writing after a consultation that the only way that they could find of saving his life was a trip to Europe.

The Superior thought that he ought to submit to the doctors' judgement and gave Mr. de Neckere permission to leave, on condition that he would always consider himself as belonging to the American mission so that if God should give him back his health, he would return there and if, unfortunately, the doctors and Superiors should consider it necessary that he remain in Rome, he would there carry out the functions of Procurator for the American mission.

In addition to the ordinary testimonial letters, Msgr. Rosati gave him a letter addressed to the faithful of Belgium to solicit their help. This was not without effect. For Mr. de Neckere obtained a considerable amount of vestments, books, linens, [and] sacred vessels. The set of organs that are presently at the seminary was sent from Belgium.

Still, it must be admitted that these trips, as totally necessary and useful as they were, always caused a kind of disorder in the Community and some distressing changes.

In that year, 1826, the Sovereign Pontiff, Leo XII, granted an extension of the jubilee to the entire Catholic world. Msgr. Rosati published it in a general letter and no means were spared in order to give the people in the different
parishes of the diocese the means of profiting by it and gaining the indulgences. Those of our priests who were involved in teaching at the seminary and the college used their vacations in the exercises of different functions of the holy ministry in order to prepare the faithful in very many areas, and especially where there was no resident priest, to gain the indulgence of the jubilee. Messrs. Odin and Timon were sent to New Madrid in October and worked there with profit. Mr. Timon preached in English and gave a series of instructions in the Cathedral in Saint Louis on the same occasion.

It was an honor to receive Msgr. Portier at the seminary. He arrived there on the last day of September and spent the entire month of October there. He made a retreat to prepare himself for his consecration and after the feast of All Saints he left in company with Msgr. Rosati and all the priests and clerics of the seminary for Saint Louis, where this ceremony was to take place with all possible solemnity. He was consecrated there on Sunday, 15 November, by the Bishop of Tenagra, assisted, for lack of other priests whom it was difficult to have, by Mr. Olivier, pastor of Prairie du Rocher, and the Reverend Father van Quicker Corne [sic for Quickenborne], Superior of the Jesuits, all of whom also came to Saint Louis, as well as the other priests of the diocese.

The evening of Msgr. Portier's consecration, some letters from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, together with two Briefs of our Holy Father, Pope Leo XII, were delivered to Msgr. Rosati. They contained some news that he was not expecting. Although some newspapers had mentioned it some weeks before, he had not been able to believe it. It was that Msgr. Dubourg, Bishop of New Orleans, had resigned his bishopric and that his resignation had been accepted by the Sovereign Pontiff. By one of these Briefs, dated 18 July 1826, what was then the Diocese of New Orleans was divided in two. One part, which retained the old name of New Orleans, was composed of the states of
Louisiana and Mississippi, and the other, which carried the name of Saint Louis, contained the state of Missouri, the Arkansas territory and all other adjacent territories. By another Brief Msgr. Rosati was named Apostolic Administrator of the two dioceses of New Orleans and Saint Louis until the Holy See would make other arrangements.

After his Consecration, Msgr. Portier went down to Louisiana and Msgr. Rosati returned with the entire Community to the seminary. The exercises of the jubilee were begun at the Barrens on the first Sunday of Advent, continued during the week, and finished on the second Sunday. The attendance by the good Catholics of that parish at the sermons and instructions and at the tribunal of Penance was quite large. The holy table was approached in equal fashion by a large crowd of communicants. In order to have the happiness of approaching it and finding a place in the confessional, there were those who spent the night at the door of the church and others who went without eating until eight o'clock at night.

The construction of the new seminary church was always the object of the desires as well as the efforts of the Community’s Superior and of the parishioners, but especially of the good Brother Oliva, who seemed to live only for fulfilling the purpose of his mission in America. The letters that were received from Mr. Baccari always contained some reference to this purpose and also were very encouraging. The materials were already prepared. The parishioners had worked in large numbers by teams in the quarries to take out the stones and had brought them in large quantities to their destination. The foundations were designed. A memorable day was chosen to bless them and to place the first one. This was the first day of the year 1827.

The bad weather did not discourage them. Although the ground was covered with several inches of snow, after the High Mass, Msgr. Rosati in pontifical robes, preceded by the clergy of the seminary and followed by a large number of
parishioners, accompanied by Mr. Odin, who officiated in cope as assistant priest, and Messrs. Paquin and Loiser, as deacon and subdeacon, went in procession, chanting psalms, from the old church to the location chosen for the new one very near the seminary.

He did everything prescribed by the *Pontificale Romanum* for this ceremony, blessed the stone, which was a square of fourteen inches. In the middle was a cross three inches square. On it was placed a pewter plaque on which the following inscription had been carved: A. D. MDCCCXXVII Die prima Januarii. Ego Joseph Episcopus Tenagrensis hunc primarium lapidem hujus Ecclesiae in honorem B. M. V. et S. Vincentii a Paulo Deo Opt. Max. aedificandae benedixi et imposui. Also placed in the same hollow were two coins of Pius VII and six of the United States.

After the ceremony, Msgr. Rosati addressed the people in English and took as his text, *Neque enim hominibus praeparatur habitatio sed Deo* (I Paralipomenon 29, 1). He observed that it was with reason that these words were (said) of the temple that Solomon was to raise in worship of the true God, but with greater reason they should be applied to the church that is going to be constructed on this spot. For if the first could be called the house of God, this one should be given this name which fits it in all the force of the term. It was said of the first that God dwelt there because in it he deigned to manifest to men His glory, His mercy and His goodness because it was the place where He wished to be honored by His people by the immolation and offering of sacrifices, those solemn acts by which His sovereign domain over all creatures was recognized, because there He bent His ear to their prayers and received by the ministry of priests and of the High Priest the vows, the offerings and the homage of His faithful. But in this church the true, the only victim

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6"A.D. 1827. January 1. I. Joseph, Bishop of Tenagra, have blessed and set in place this first stone of this church to be built for the supreme and highest God in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Vincent de Paul."

7"For this dwelling is not prepared for men but for God." (1 Chronicles 29, 1. The books of Chronicles were formerly known as the books of Paralipomenon.)
immolated by the faith of the patriarchs and God's people since the beginning of the world, of which the old sacrifices were only a weak image and from which they drew all their value, will be immolated daily by the eternal High Priest Who will offer the vows and prayers of the people He has gained by His own blood and will intercede in their favor before the justice of His Father. Here the fullness of the divinity of this God made man will dwell really and corporeally in the Holy Eucharist. Here it is not the material and powerless elements of figures and shadows that will be offered, but the real body, the blood, the holy humanity, the adored divinity of the Word made Flesh. Oh! one can then cry out that this place will be truly holy, vere iste sanctus est, in truth, non hominibus praeparatus habitatio sed Deo. David, although dear to God, was not considered worthy of building Him His house, of raising His temple. That honor had been reserved to Solomon. And who are we to deserve that He grants us the honor of building Him His house, of raising this church? You are the people dear to God, you are the people whom He has chosen by such an honorable commission. He deigns to approve your offerings, to accept your work, and to make use of your ministry to raise this building which is to be dedicated to His worship. Ah, how many, I shall not mention infidels or heretics, but how many Catholics like us, our own brothers, are there who have no church, no altar, no sacrifice, no high priest, no priest? It is not thus with you, my brothers. You are truly a chosen people. Vos genus electum. He has chosen you to raise a building to His glory, of which you yourselves and your children will experience all the advantages. Non fecit taliter omni nationi. He has not given to many others this honor and this advantage. Non fecit taliter omni nationi. Vos elegit Deus. So lend your hand with courage and zeal to this great work, work together at it strongly with the means that Providence has given you, offer to God a portion of what you have received from His generosity: your money, your strength. And if anyone wants to frighten you because of the magnitude of the undertaking, be on your guard against yielding to the wretched pretexts of laziness, indifference, or avarice. Remember non enim hominibus praeparatus habitatio sed Deo and all obstacles will disappear. If anyone tells you that it is too grandiose and too vast, answer non enim hominibus praeparatus habitatio sed Deo. If anyone raises the objection of your poverty, remember that it is for God that you are working and that what is directed to His glory will return to your own advantage and that He is rich enough to return a hundredfold, even in this world,

"He has not acted thus toward any other nation." Psalm 147, 1 [Vulgate].
what you will have given with generosity. Remember that it is for yourselves that you are working. Do not forget that it is not He who has need of you but you, yes you who have need of Him, of a church, of an altar, of sacrifice, of sacraments and of priests.

The ceremony was concluded by a solemn blessing given by the Bishop and the people returned content to their hearths.

On the first holiday of that year there was a rather interesting gathering in the church. It was thought necessary to get the children accustomed to following the holy practices of the Catholic Church at an early age and to make good use of the spiritual treasures that it dispenses to its children. The parents had been asked ahead of time to send to the church on that day all their children who had already reached the age of reason and who were ready to go to Confession and gain the indulgence of the jubilee. We saw a large number of those fair and attractive youngsters of both sexes arrive. They were given an instruction adapted to their capacities. They then went to Confession, they were led in some prayers, and in that way they were given the means of gaining, to the extent that they were capable, the indulgence of the jubilee.

The holy Bishop of Bardstown, Msgr. Flaget, and his worthy coadjutor, Msgr. David, enjoyed the general esteem and respect of the clergy of the United States. All our Missionaries, who had had the happiness of doing their apprenticeship in the holy ministry in this country at their school, always retained a special affection for these venerable prelates. In that regard Msgr. Rosati was second to none of his confreres and he professed in the highest degree that he owed very much to these worthy successors of the Apostles. Finding himself now at the head not only of a numerous Community but also of two vast dioceses, he felt the need to be enlightened and encouraged by men of consummate experience and in that way to make up for his own inexperience, to take the initiative in a certain sense, and to
orient himself toward a good beginning of his administration.

He resolved, then, to make a trip to Kentucky in order to spend some days with these holy Bishops. He had himself accompanied by Mr. Dahmen, who was replaced in the parish of Sainte Genevieve by Mr. Permoli, and Brother Blanka. They left from Sainte Genevieve on horseback on 8 January and crossed one section of the Mississippi over the ice, and, after eleven days of rather uncomfortable travel because of the bad weather, they finally arrived safe and sound at Bardstown, and they were received by Msgr. Flaget and his coadjutor with joy and a satisfaction that could not be expressed and that made them forget everything that they had suffered on the road from the cold, the rain, the snow and the ice. Their astonishment was very great when they noted the great change that had taken place for the good of religion in the region since they had left it and they blessed God for the blessings that he had poured out so abundantly on the works of these prelates and their clergy. That served not a little to encourage the young Bishop who was their guest. He later acknowledged often that this visit to Kentucky had done him a great deal of good. He could scarcely detach himself from Msgr. Flaget and his coadjutor and he made good use of all the precious moments that he had spent with him.

One of the principal purposes of his trip was to have the advice of the two Bishops on a rather important point. In the letters that he had received from Rome after Msgr. Dubourg’s resignation, the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda informed him that there was thought of naming him Bishop of New Orleans and that someone was already under consideration for placement in the See of Saint Louis. The Bishop of Tenagra could not bring himself to accept the diocese that was proposed to him. He had some reasons that were personnel and he also had some that concerned the Congregation. The two Bishops approved these and advised
that he make them known to Rome and that he ask the Holy Father not to remove him from Saint Louis. Supported by these venerable prelates, Msgr. Rosati wrote to the Sacred Congregation, to Mr. Baccari, and to the Sovereign Pontiff himself. These steps eventually had the desired effect and the wishes of the Bishop of Tenagra were carried out.

It was at last necessary to leave and on 31 January they set out on the return trip to Missouri and they took the Louisville and Vincennes road. Some heavy rains had caused considerable flooding in the country that they had to cross, but Providence saved them from all the dangers to which they were frequently exposed. In Vincennes they saw the ruins of the large and beautiful church that had been destroyed by a hurricane [tornado] before it was completed. They received the hospitality of Mr. Champommier, who was the pastor of Vincennes, and they had the happiness of celebrating Holy Mass. They continued their trip and on 19 February arrived safely at Sainte Genevieve where Mr. Vergani was taking the place of Mr. Permoli, who had gone down to New Orleans in order to stay at the parish with Mr. Borgna. On the 20th Mr. Olivier arrived there with his baggage in order to go into retirement at the seminary.

After having spent more than thirty years in Illinois in charge of many parishes and specifically that of Saint Joseph at Prairie du Rocher, where he made his residence, this respected old man, almost eighty years old, could no longer live alone and continue, as he had done for such a long time, to serve the parish, to do his own housework, his bread, his garden, his cooking. Full of courage, mortified, zealous as he was, if one had listened to him, he would have stayed there until his death, but his sight was very much weakened, his strength was beginning to diminish considerably. To permit him to remain would have exposed him to some grievous accident. For one evening, standing close to the fire, he had a dizzy spell, fell on the hearth and suffered some bruises on his forehead which had struck against the andirons. When the
Bishop was informed of this, he went to see him and took the occasion of this accident to order him to leave the parish and come spend the rest of his days at the seminary. This holy priest found it painful to leave the parish, especially knowing that there was no one to take his place immediately, but he received a promise that he would be replaced as soon as possible and in the meanwhile someone would be sent twice a month from the seminary to officiate.

This holy old man obeyed and promised to arrange his affairs in order to go to the seminary in the month of February. He left at the rectory everything that was necessary for his successor’s upkeep, for all the furniture in the house belonged to him, even the supplies of wine for Mass. And he brought to the seminary everything that was needed to furnish the room that had been prepared for him on the ground floor in order to spare him the inconvenience and danger of going up and down the stairs.

So he went to the seminary in company with the Bishop. He is still living there at the present time (February 1840), a dear person venerated and admired by all the numerous inhabitants of that institution on which he brings numerous blessings by his fervent prayers. He edifies them by his example and the practice of every virtue, and he charms them by his friendly conversation and the sweetness and simplicity of his ancient and patriarchal ways.9

As soon as he was installed in his lodging, he gave an unequivocal proof of his detachment from the things of earth and showed that he aspired only to the possession of eternal treasures. He waited for a time when he could find the Bishop and Superior of the house alone in his room, he entered carrying a sack that contained seven to eight hundred

9Father Olivier stayed at the Barrens until his death on 30 January 1841, when he was over ninety years of age. A portrait of him, recently restored through the efforts of Father John Rybolt, C.M., is in the archives of Saint Mary’s Seminary, Perryville, Missouri.
dollars in cash, he put it at his feet, saying with the simplicity of a child, "Monseigneur, since you have given me refuge in this holy house, where I will have the joy of finishing my days in peace, I offer you what I have. I beg you to accept it for the use and needs of the community. I have no need of anything. I have only about a year to live. I have enough clothes until death." This action showed that he was superior to the weakness of that age which always holds on with a stronger tenacity to what it possesses. Mr. Vergani was sent to visit Mr. Oliver's former parish twice a month.

On 1 March, after Msgr. Rosati had called the Community together, he appointed Mr. Odin as Superior and Mr. Vergani as assistant and entrusted them with the care of the house during his absence. He went down to Louisiana and stayed there until June, occupied with visiting the parishes, administering confirmation, and making the rules necessary for the administration of that part of the diocese. He named as his Vicar General there the Reverend Father Antoine de Sedala [sic for Sedella], established a council that was to meet twice a month at the Bishop's house, even during his absence, and he named Mr. Jeanjean secretary of the diocese. He made the episcopal visitation of the Ursuline convent of New Orleans and made some ordinances.

On 23 June he arrived at the seminary with a number of young persons who were coming to the college. This latter institution was beginning to experience a considerable growth. The Bishop acquired all the furniture from the College of New Orleans, which had not been able to be carried on because of the lack of professors. He then had this furniture, consisting of wooden beds, wardrobes, linens, an indoor toilet, and a considerable provision of classical Latin and French books, transported to that [college] of the Barrens. Thus they had the means for receiving a goodly number of students.

Some weeks after Msgr. Rosati's return to the seminary,
it was guaranteed that he would henceforth stay in Missouri. He received letters from the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda and a Brief from Our Holy Father Leo XII, dated 20 March 1827, that named him Bishop of Saint Louis, but also leaving him with the administration of the Diocese of New Orleans until the nomination of another bishop. These letters were received with joy by the prelate and also caused a great satisfaction within the entire Community.

At the same time, timely help was received for the seminary and for the construction of the new church. Mr. Baccari had sent five hundred dollars and the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda had added another three hundred to it. The seminary was growing in personnel and the Community had an altogether complete look about it. Mr. Odin, as we have mentioned previously, had the post of assistant and took the place of the Superior in his absence. Mr. Vergani was his assistant. Mr. Timon was named Procurator and Mr. Paquin Admonitor. The construction of the church was already beginning to move forward. The new fields were promising a new harvest that would in the future compensate for the expenses and the work that they had expended. One hundred bushels of wheat were hoped for. Twenty-six paying students in the college also provided a part of the expenses, and supplies of every kind were also sent from New Orleans for the support of the seminary.

The labors of our priests also extended in proportion as their number increased. In July Messrs. Odin and Timon visited New Madrid. Mr. Dahmen, although in charge of the parish of Sainte Genevieve, regularly visited the Creoles who had settled in large numbers at Old Mines, more than forty miles away. And Mr. Timon visited the Irish who lived at Potosi and Mine-a-Breton. The Bishop had the opportunity to see the good that was done in those parishes and in the others of his new diocese during the visitation that he made of them that year. He saw the holy table surrounded by a large number of persons, he also Confirmed a very large
number, not only of the young faithful who came to make their First Communion, but also of other older ones. Everywhere there were requests for priests. There were offers of land for building churches. And he was forced to write Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci. Rogate ergo Domininum messis ut mittat operarios in messem suam. In October he sent Mr. Bouiller to Louisiana to stay at Ascension with Mr. Tichitoli and in November he himself went down there with Mr. Mascaroni.

By a special protection Providence twice saved their lives during that trip. For the steamboat North America was ripped open by a stump while it was going down[river] and sank to the bottom. Nevertheless, the passengers had time to save their lives and their baggage. For five days they camped on the riverbank, waiting for another boat. And when they were taken on board the other one, called The General Lafayette, it caught fire in the hold among the cargo and after having been saved from the water, they were threatened with death by fire. But here again Providence declared itself in their favor. There was sufficient time to put out the fire. They could with reason say those words of the psalmist, transivimus per ignem et aquam et eduxisti nos in refugiero.11

They reached New Orleans on 28 November. The Bishop spent the rest of that year 1827 and the first four months of 1828 there, making the regular visitations of almost all the parishes, and he left again on 12 May to go back up to the Diocese of Saint Louis. He left New Orleans, his heart broken with sorrow because of the loss that the Congregation was going to suffer of an excellent person in the flower of his age.

Mr. Vergani had been assigned to visiting the parish of

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10"The harvest indeed is rich but the laborers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to his harvest." (Matthew 9:37-38).

11"We have passed through fire and water but you have led us into a place of rest." Psalm 65, 12 [Vulgate].
Prairie du Rocher twice a month. On the occasion of one of these visits, when he mounted a spirited horse that he was not familiar with, the horse ran away with him and he was violently thrown to the ground. He fell on his chest and was unconscious for some time. Regaining consciousness, after some days, he thought that this fall would not have any other effects. He took no precautions. He was mistaken for it had had an impact on his system that was fatal to him. From that time on, he was attacked by an illness of the chest that totally ruined his health. The doctors believed that the temperate climate of Louisiana would do him good. The bishop had him go down there. Alas! It was too late. When he reached New Orleans, he was so weak that he could scarcely stand. He was lodged in one of the Bishop’s rooms and he never again arose from his bed. He asked his dear Superior to hear his Confession, which he made with very touching sentiments of piety and compunction. And the prelate gave him the Holy Viaticum on 11 May. On the 12th, the day of the Bishop’s departure, this young priest was dying. Mr. Monti had administered the Last Sacraments when Msgr. Rosati embarked on his return to the seminary. It was learned that some hours later he had breathed his last.

There was good reason to regret this loss. Mr. Vergani was one of the young men who had frequented the oratory in Milan directed by Mr. Rossetti. He had distinguished himself by his regularity and the innocence of his ways and by his assiduity in attending all the exercises that were made there. He was also among those whom Mr. Rossetti cultivated in a special way and who had resolved to leave the world and consecrate themselves to the foreign missions. He left for America with Mr. Rossetti and also came to the seminary with him. When Mr. Rossetti proposed to the members of his community that they attach themselves to our Congregation, Mr. Vergani received this advice with joy and was one of the first to ask to be admitted to the number of novices. He had not made his major studies. He had learned the
trade that Saint Paul had exercised, that of a leather currier. 12 But he was still young and did not lack talent and especially he loved work and study. So he was received with the status of cleric.

During his novitiate he took the regular classes in Latin and French and the humanities. At the same time he was very exact in all the exercises of the novitiate and at certain times of the day, on holidays and during vacation, he also did manual labor at which he was very skillful. To him are due the very useful handicrafts at the seminary that were made during the time of his novitiate and studies and which constituted his recreation. His character was made for living in Community: mild, charitable and obliging toward his equals, submissive, respectful and obedient toward his Superiors, a faithful observer of the Rule, he spared no effort in that regard. He was always ready for every kind of sacrifice when it was a question of carrying out his duties. He also won the esteem and affection of everyone. His piety was unflagging. He was always a model of fervor. Even though his talents were not extraordinary, still by means of that sustained application that was his very own he made progress that put him in a position to keep up with the others who had had the advantage of a more cultivated education in their early youth.

He was promoted to Orders as soon as he had acquired the knowledge demanded by the canons and when on 23 September he was raised to the Priesthood, he was already in a position to exercise its functions in such a way as to procure the glory of God and the salvation of the neighbor as soon as holy obedience would apply him to the exercise of the holy ministry. He had already prepared some instructions in English and French and he studied apologetics carefully. Entrusted with the care of the seminarians and with the

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12 This is a rather surprising lapse on Rosati's part. Saint Paul, of course, was a tentmaker.
office of prefect, he had won their confidence and their affection and at the same time he had maintained the most exact discipline among them. Finally, he had given proofs of his zeal by the different things that he tried in his holy ministry. His humility, his piety, and his charity won him all hearts. To see him on a mission was to hope that this worthy son of Saint Vincent would work with success for long years in cultivating that part of the Lord's field where the need for workers is so great. But the always adorable and inscrutable designs of Providence which took him away from us at the beginning of his course must be adored. The sorrow of his confreres, his Superiors and of everyone who knew him was clear testimony to his merits.

When the Bishop of Saint Louis reached the Barrens on 21 May, he found the community composed of four priests, eight brothers, sixteen seminarians and some thirty boys in the college. It quickly increased with the four young seminarians, all members of the Congregation, who arrived from France at the seminary in the month of June. They were Belgian by nationality: Mr. Doutrelingue had already made his vows and Messrs. Brands, Van Cloosten and Lefevre were still novices.

Mr. Bouiller had been recalled from Louisiana and sent to found the new parish at Old Mines. Those areas, already very populated with Catholics, had great need for a priest. It was proposed that two brick churches be built, one at Potosi, where there was not yet one, and another at Old Mines, which had a rather poor one made of timbers and very small. Mr. Bouiller was to stay in this latter place, with Mr. Etienne La Marque who offered the priest his house and table.

The growth in the number of boys at the college absolutely demanded a location more spacious than the one it had at that time. The resolution was taken to construct a building that would be devoted exclusively to the use of the college. It was to be of brick, but with foundations of stone. It was to have three stories, thirty feet long and forty wide.
The ground floor was to be divided into several rooms, a larger one for the study hall, the other smaller ones for the classrooms, and the other two stories were each to have two small rooms for the professors and a large dormitory for the students. The location was set at a distance of 100 feet from the seminary but on the same line as the seminary and the church. When all the contracts had been let out for the stones, the bricks and the woods, the foundations were laid on 23 July. Msgr. Rosati laid the first stone, Mr. Odin the second, Mr. Paquier the third and Mr. Lutz the fourth. This latter had come to seek faculties for the mission among the Kansas Indian nation which lived in Upper Missouri.

In that year of 1828, there was at the Barrens the first public exercise and first solemn distribution of prizes to the college students after the customary examination at which the Bishop of Saint Louis presided. There was a large number of outsiders, especially the parents of students, who were charmed with the students’ progress. There was something very touching in this distribution of prizes. After those who had won them had received them from the hand of the Bishop, all the boys marched two by two from the room to the chapel, singing a very beautiful song in harmony, and they went to lay the crowns that circled their heads on the altar. They did homage to Him from Whose generosity they had their talents. It was lovely. Everyone felt it. Tears were shed at this touching sight.

During that year’s vacation, some priests and young clerics from the seminary went with their Superior and Bishop to Saint Charles and attended the solemn consecration of the large and beautiful stone church that the Reverend Jesuit Fathers in charge of that parish had built there. That august ceremony took place on the twentieth Sunday after Pentecost, 12 October 1828, and on the following day the Bishop confirmed sixty-six persons and blessed the new cemetery. On his return to Saint Louis he confirmed twenty-eight persons and blessed the new chapel
of the Religious of the Sacred Heart. At Cahokia\textsuperscript{13} there were thirty Confirmations and at Prairie du Rocher twenty-three. At the beginning of the school year he resumed his ordinary occupations at the Barrens.

That year these were not interrupted for any length of time. During the winter, which he spent almost entirely at the seminary in the bosom of the Community, he gave instructions the ordinary conferences to it, as well as to the seminarians, to whom he gave a daily class of theology and twice a week one in Holy Scripture. He left for Louisiana only on 16 March 1829 and stayed there until 14 July, on which day he left to go back up to his diocese with Messrs. Antoine Blanc and Mascaroni and eight students for the college. He resumed his lessons in theology and Holy Scripture and his other ordinary occupations.

Mr. Bouiller had already made the necessary preparations for building a brick church at Old Mines, whose inhabitants had shown the greatest zeal for that proposal. The cornerstone had to be blessed and put in place. Since the Bishop could not go there, on 20 July he gave Mr. Bouiller permission to do this ceremony. At almost the same time there arrived at the Barrens a number of young Mexican clerics who were sent by the Vicars General of the various dioceses of that country where there were no more bishops.\textsuperscript{14} All the Sees, excepting that of Mexico [City] whose Archbishop had retired to Spain following the revolution that had disrupted the country, were vacant. The Vicar General of Puebla de los Angeles had written to Msgr. Rosati to tell him of the universal desolation of those

\textsuperscript{13}A reconstruction. The original is almost indecipherable.

\textsuperscript{14}After Mexico achieved its independence in 1821, its government claimed the right to appoint bishops that had formerly belonged to the Bourbon monarchy. It sought confirmation of this from the Papacy together with official recognition of Mexico’s independence. The Papacy, on the other hand, resisted the claim of patronage and was reluctant to recognize independence for fear of offending the king of Spain.
churches. He asked him to consecrate holy oils for the ten dioceses where there were 7000 churches and forewarned him that recourse would be had to him, as the nearest bishop, for the ordination of young clerics. Before his departure for New Orleans this prelate had consecrated thirty enormous jars of holy oils, containing 300 gallons, and had ordained some clerics who had come from Mexico to New Orleans with dimissorial letters from their Ordinary. After his departure several others arrived. They went up to the seminary. These poor young clerics, who had just made such a long journey in order to receive Holy Orders, were given hospitality. They were lodged as well as possible. The Bishop, after having carefully examined their dimissorials and other documents necessary following [the decrees of] Benedict XIV, examined them and gave them Orders. It was fortunate for them that they arrived when they did because he was on the point of leaving for Baltimore.

The Archbishop of that city had addressed some letters to all his suffragans in which he invited them to come to Baltimore for the first provincial council that was to open on 4 October. Although the dioceses of New Orleans and Saint Louis were not part of the ecclesiastical province of Baltimore, the Bishop of Saint Louis, in order to fulfill what was prescribed by a decree of the Council of Trent for bishops who had no metropolitan to choose one and for all, but only for the purpose of attending the council of the province, whose decrees would have the force of law in those exempt dioceses, answered the Archbishop that, without prejudice to the rights and privileges of the Diocese of Saint Louis and of that of New Orleans, he was choosing the Metropolitan See of Baltimore solely in order to attend the council.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{15}Trent's decree that exempt bishops should choose a metropolitan for the purpose of attending a provincial council but without prejudice to the rest of their exemption is to be found in Session 24, Chapter II.
He left, then, for Saint Louis, administered confirmation in some neighboring parishes, and after having celebrated the feast of the patron saint of the diocese, left by stagecoach with Mr. Jeanjean, whom he had chosen as his theologian, and Mr. Blanc and took the road to Vincennes. They ran a complete risk of losing their lives during that trip because of a terrible accident. When the coach, drawn by four horses, crossed a weak bridge over a river, the bridge suddenly gave way and fell into the river with the stagecoach and the horses and the passengers. There was at least eight feet of water. The coach, held up by the wreckage of the bridge, remained far enough out so that the passengers could get out and even take off their suitcases. But after that it sank to the bottom. Despite that, it was possible to draw it out little by little and after several hours continue the journey. In this accident Mr. Jeanjean was the only one who suffered any effects of the fall for several days. This preservation from such a great danger of being crushed under the ruins of the bridge and of being buried in the waters of the river was seen as miraculous. After the council, which closed on 18 October, the Bishop of Saint Louis visited Canada with his traveling companions and received a most affectionate welcome from the Sulpicians of Montreal. From time to time those gentlemen had helped our seminary at the Barrens by sending Mass intentions and subsequently they often sent similar help.

The Bishop of Saint Louis reached the seminary on 27 December 1829 and there he had the pleasure of finding Mr. de Neckere who had returned from Europe, where he had been, as we have already said, very useful to our establishment. Among the letters that were delivered to the Bishop there was one from Propaganda and a Brief of Pope Pius VIII that named Mr. de Neckere the Bishop of New Orleans. He gave it to this worthy cleric, whose modesty was quite alarmed at the reception of Apostolic Letters. He asked for time to consult the Father of Lights by his prayers before
making a decision in such an important matter. More Mexican clerics with dimissorials from their ordinaries had also arrived at the seminary in order to receive Orders.

After the Bishop of Saint Louis had assured himself of their knowledge by the examination that he had them undergo, he ordained them, and a few days later these six new priests went down to New Orleans with Messrs. Jeanjean and Blanc and returned happily to their homeland.

Finally, on 6 January 1830, Msgr. de Neckere agreed to submit to the Will of God Who had made it known through the agency of His Vicar on earth and he accepted the Bishopric of New Orleans. The bishop of Saint Louis hastened to communicate this happy news by a circular letter to all the pastors and priests of the Diocese of New Orleans and forewarned them that henceforth he considered himself relieved of the administration of that diocese, that they were to address themselves to their Bishop, who intended to remain at the seminary until Easter and would go down to New Orleans in order to be consecrated there on the fifth Sunday after Easter.

Although Msgr. Rosati found himself relieved of a large portion of his burden by his fortunate nomination of Msgr. de Neckere to the Bishopric of New Orleans, still he found it necessary to be frequently absent from the house in order to carry out his duties as bishop and to administer his diocese which was growing constantly. He has already called together the Community’s council, explained to them everything that touched this matter, and communicated his intention of naming Mr. Dahmen the Superior of the house, according to the faculties and powers that he had received, reserving to himself the responsibility of Visitor, until the Superior General should decide otherwise. Everyone agreed to this arrangement. Thus Mr. Dahmen was recalled from Sainte Genevieve, where he was replaced by Mr. Doutrelinge. On 12 January, at chapter (it was a Friday), the Bishop addressed the entire Community, named and declared in virtue of the
faculties that had been granted him Mr. Dahmen Superior of the house, Mr. Timon assistant and Admonitor, Mr. Paquin Procurator, Mr. Odin President of the college and Mr. Paquin Vice-President, Mr. Timon Director of seminarians. He spoke to them of the obedience owed to the Superior and gave witness to the confidence that he had that if everyone carried out the duties of his post, the house would not fail to prosper with God's blessing.

At the end of April news was received of the arrival of Mr. [John Baptist] Tornatore in New Orleans. For a long time Mr. Rosati had been asking Mr. Baccari for him in vain. Finally, he obtained him from the new Superior General, Monsieur Salhorgne. Mr. Dahmen was sent back to Sainte Genevieve and, until the arrival of Mr. Tornatore at the seminary where he was to exercise the functions of Superior, Mr. Timon was put at the head of the Community.16

Msgr. de Neckere had twice coughed up blood during his stay at the seminary, once in January and again in April, some days before the time set for his departure for New Orleans. He was frightened by it. He believed that it was a clear declaration of God’s Will which did not call him to the episcopate since He did not give him the strength and health necessary to exercise its functions. Everything that the Bishop of Saint Louis could say to reassure him was useless.

16 Tornatore was a moral theologian of the most rigoristic school. The story is told that Bishop Kenrick of Philadelphia, whom Tornatore had taught at the College of the Propaganda in Rome, sent him a copy of his Theologia Moralis and Tornatore responded that he could not believe that a former student of his could become such a laxist. Tornatore was not the first choice to succeed Rosati as Vincentian Superior. Bishop Rosati has tactfully omitted the story of Father Angelo Boccardo, who was appointed to that post in 1827 and who arrived in New Orleans with a substantial contribution from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons. While boarding a steamboat in New Orleans, he accidentally dropped the money into the Mississippi River. So distraught was he that he returned immediately to Europe. Tornatore's term as Superior at the Barrens was an unhappy one for all concerned. He later served in a number of houses, including Saint Vincent's College in Cape Girardeau (Missouri), and the seminaries in Bardstown and Philadelphia during the short-lived Vincentian involvement with those institutions. He died at Perryville on 20 February 1864.
It was impossible to persuade him to leave, although he had already gone to Sainte Genevieve with the Bishop of Saint Louis to catch a steamboat on which reservations had been made. On the boat's arrival, Msgr. Rosati was obliged to leave without him, for he had called together all the clergy of the Diocese of New Orleans and invited the Bishops of Charleston and Mobile for the consecration which was to take place on the fifth Sunday after Easter. Nevertheless, the Bishop of Saint Louis observed to him on leaving that, since he had accepted the office of bishop, he had to consider himself as entrusted with the diocese and he was obliged to administer it, that he [Rosati] was going to New Orleans to keep the word that he had solemnly given to the clergy of that diocese, and in order to receive the two prelates whom he had invited, and to prove to them that if they had made their journey in vain, it was not his fault. As a matter of fact, the Bishop of Saint Louis went to New Orleans before the fifth Sunday, made his excuses to the bishops of Charleston and Mobile and all the clergy who had come from different corners of the diocese. It was a sorrow for everyone. They returned home quite upset.

Nevertheless, the Bishop of Saint Louis' trip was not in vain. He administered a large number of Confirmations, consecrated holy oils for the diocese in virtue of faculties from the Holy See, solemnly consecrated the church of the Ursulines in New Orleans, ordained several other Mexican clerics, laid the first stone of the new church of Saint Michael near the convent of the Sacred Heart, and what is more, he then had the satisfaction of doing what had been the sole purpose of his trip: the consecration of Msgr. de Neckere.

This holy man, of very delicate conscience, had been struck by what the Bishop of Saint Louis had said to him immediately before his departure. He felt that having accepted the office of bishop he was obliged to administer it. He resolved to go there. It was, however, still his resolution to write to Rome to be relieved of this burden which he
feared so strongly. He then went down together with one of the trustees of the parish of New Orleans and reached that city on 19 June, when Msgr. Rosati was on the verge of leaving the house and going to embark for the return to Saint Louis. Msgr. Portier was at that time also in the diocese. The surprise was very agreeable to them. The Bishop of Saint Louis canceled his departure and had his luggage brought back from the boat. He was asked if he was coming to be consecrated. He said no. The two bishops fell on their knees and begged him to take pity on that large diocese. The bishop-elect could hold out and said with tears, "Assure me that I can do it in conscience?" "Yes," they answered, "we take it on our own conscience. We will answer for it before God." He gave in. As soon as the Bishop of Saint Louis went to give this good news to the clergy of the parish, it spread throughout the town. The two bishops went with the newly-elect to the Ursuline convent. The nuns were thrilled with joy. They proclaimed the good news with the sound of bells. The consecration was set for 24 June, the feast of Saint John the Baptist. The bishop-elect stayed with the holy chaplain of the convent, Mr. Richard, in order to make his retreat and the preparations necessary for the consecration were hastened. It took place on the day set, to the great satisfaction of all the clergy and all the people.

After this happy event Msgr. Rosati, totally satisfied, set sail for Missouri on the 30th of the same month. He reached Saint Louis on 9 July and on the 18th he was at the seminary to celebrate the feast of Saint Vincent there with his dear confreres and to officiate at it pontifically. Mr. Tornatore had preceded him and had come directly there some weeks before with several students for the college. News was received of the death of Mr. Colucci, distinguished priest and missionary of our Congregation and outstanding benefactor of our American mission. On the 22nd of the same month there was a solemn service in the seminary church for the repose of his soul, which the Bishop with all
the clergy attended.

On the 30th Msgr. Rosati called together the entire Community, appointed Mr. Tornatore Superiore, Mr. Timon assistant, Mr. Odin Admonitor and President of the college, Mr. Paquin Procurator and Vice-President and the last three as Consultors. Nevertheless, he wrote to the Superior General to ask him to confirm the choice of Mr. Tornatore as Superior and to send him the patent according to rule. This was sent by Mr. Salhorgne at the beginning of October 1830 and reached Mr. Tornatore at the seminary on 6 January 1831.

From that time on Msgr. Rosati made his ordinary residence in Saint Louis where the business of the diocese and the construction of his Cathedral, of the hospital, the orphan asylum required his presence. He gave Mr. Tornatore the faculties of Vicar General of the diocese. He made frequent visits to the seminary where his affections and his heart have always resided.

Also, in view of the fact that the number of members capable of governing the Congregation in America had increased, that those who had been trained had already acquired enough experience, he also asked the Superior General to name one of them as Visitor. Mr. Salhorgne agreed to his requests and sent the patent of Visitor to Mr. Tornatore, with a very kind answer. “I enclosed here,” he said in his letter of 30 May,

in accord with the request that you have made the patent of Visitor for Mr. Tornatore but on the condition, Monseigneur, that you be pleased to keep always the high surveillance over all our confreres and that nothing important will be done except after consultation with you. Your knowledge of the area and the eminence of the episcopal character with which you are clothed assure your right to this and I like to believe that all will make it a religious duty to follow in their conduct and in the exercise of the functions of their state the directions that you will give them.17

17Tornatore was given the authority of a Visitor (a.k.a. Provincial Superior)
This wise Superior recognized the usefulness of the college establishment and approved the plan that had been drawn up of teaching music. "Your decision," he wrote to the Bishop of Saint Louis,

will suffice, I have no doubt, to calm the worries that some have on this subject. Music, drawing, gymnastic exercises are good in themselves and they enter into the system of education that is given in colleges. There can at times be abuses, but that is not sufficient reason for forbidding them to young people for what is not abused? I suppose, however, that these arts will be taught by others than our confreres, although always in the presence of one of them, if that is considered necessary. 18

Finally, in order to remove any kind of difficulty regarding the lands and other goods of the seminary and to assure the property as much as possible to the Congregation, the Bishop gave the titles of those goods in legal form, that is, of 640 acres or one section which is a square mile of land, (it is on it that the seminary is located), the mill which had two sets of millstones, a saw for making planks, and a carding machine for wool, finally, another section of land, about fifty acres, adjoining the mill. These properties were given to the seminary purely and simply, without specifying any charge for it. 19
We will go no further with our recollections. Others will now be in a position to continue them and we urge them not to fail to do so. This will be a great satisfaction for those who will come after us and they will have reason to thank God for all that He has done to prepare for them the means of doing the good that Providence has called them to do. They will work with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of the neighbor.

They will redouble their zeal when the Father of the family Who has called them will say to them:

*Levate oculos vestros et videte regiones quia albae sunt iam ad messem et qui metit mercedem accipit et congregat fructum in vitam aeternam, ut et qui seminans simul gaudeat et qui metit. Ego misi vos metere quod vos non laboratis. Alii laboraverunt et vos in labores eorum introistis.*

(John 4:36-38, et seq.)

[Conclusion]

in Latin that this property belonged wholly and entirely to the Priests of the Mission. Shortly thereafter, on 10 August 1833, Odin, Paquin and Dahmen sold the lands to Tornatore for $4,000. Less than six months later, on 23 January 1834, Tornatore sold them for the same amount to Timon. On 1 January 1843, Tornatore signed his last will and testament which left the seminary lands to Fathers Blase Raho, Francis Xavier Dahmen, Thomas Burke and Peter Chandy. On 18 May 1848 Tornatore sold the lands for $10,000 to Fathers Thaddeus Amat, Thomas Burke and James Rolando. Why such complex transactions were required in spite of the seminary’s incorporation is difficult to understand. The true history of the seminary lands has yet to be researched.

20"'Lift up your eyes and see the fields for they are already white for the havest and he who reaps receives his recompense and gathers fruit for eternal life so that both sower and reaper rejoice together. I have sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have worked and you have come into their labors.'" (John 4:36-38).
Since God has entrusted to you the care of the family, He will impart to you the requisite qualities for the proper discharge of that duty. Let Him act, and do not become disturbed when things go against your wishes. Be particularly on your guard not to give pain to anyone but be a consolation to all.

St. Vincent de Paul

To wear oneself out for God, not to have any goods or strength except to be used for God, this is what Our Lord Himself did, Who was consumed for the love of His Father.

St. Vincent de Paul

Always have Jesus in view so as to regulate your labors by His intentions and your whole interior by His example. It was He Who called you to live His life and to enter His activities by the exercise of charity.

St. Vincent de Paul

O Sir, how I wish the members of the Mission who live together would do all things in unison! Friends act in this way and how much more, then, should they, who live together as brothers, practice this.

St. Vincent de Paul